



TOWN OF DEDHAM

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

MICHAEL J.
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Via e-mail to: Testimony.HWMJudiciary@mahouse.gov

Dear Chair Aaron Michlewitz and Chair Claire Cronin,

Please accept the following testimony with regard to SB2820 - An Act to reform police standards and shift resources to build a more equitable, fair and just commonwealth that values Black lives and communities of color.

I have reviewed the original SB2800 and a summary of provisions in SB2820. I concur with the concerns submitted by the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association on this matter dated July 16, 2020. I also offer the following comments:

I am not clear as to what the Legislature means with regards to “shift resources” as included in the title to this bill. Police training has been and remains underfunded by the Legislature. It is my understanding that the Fire Service receives significantly more training funds than police. The job of a police officer is complex and dynamic. Human behaviors which officers interact with on a daily basis are often unpredictable and not easily measured. The proposed bill includes multiple areas of training, yet there is no specific mention of funding to support training.

Section 52 includes a requirement to document all stops and frisks, even if consensual. I am concerned for officer safety in this regard. Will officers risk their own safety by hesitating to frisk for weapons? Will officers avoid encountering individual creating a risk to public safety?

Section 55 includes restrictions on the use of chemical agents. It appears that even the use of oleoresin Capsicum (OC) spray would only be allowed if the presented definition of “imminent harm” is met. This is a risk for both officer and public safety.

The mission of the Dedham Police Department is to protect and serve the citizens of Dedham through collaboration, preventative programs and the judicious enforcement of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the by-laws of the Town of Dedham.



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I am concerned with regards to the impacts this legislation may have on officer retention and future recruitment.

This bill appears to be a hasty reaction to issues that would be better suited to be examined in depth individually. Rushing such legislation in order to meet a Legislative Session deadline is not a productive path to follow.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael d'Entremont
Chief of Police

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